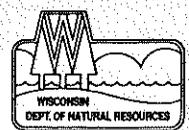


Ackley Wildlife Area

Welcome to Ackley Wildlife Area



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

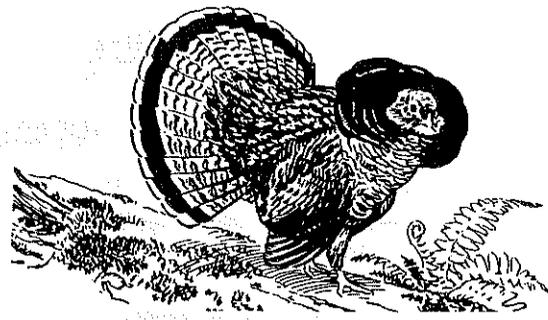
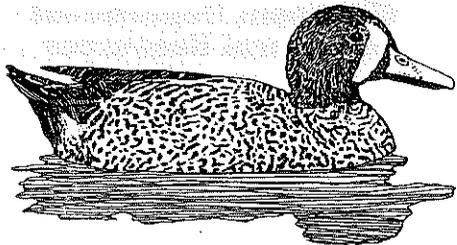


Our Roots Run Deep

Welcome to Ackley Wildlife Area. Originally, this area was forested with white pine, hemlock, and northern hardwoods, but logging and the fires that followed reduced the plant life to shrubs, grasses, and aspen. A few areas were cleared and farmed, but were later abandoned. In the early 1930's the sharp-tailed grouse population was at an all time high due to the ideal habitat provided by fire and pioneer agriculture. As fire protection increased, the farm fields reverted back to forest. In 1951, the Department of Natural Resources saw the decline of prairie grouse throughout Wisconsin and Ackley Wildlife Area was created to stop the rate of decline of these birds. Prescribed burning set back succession to improve habitat along with mowing and chemical processes. In the early 1980's, managers realized that 1,100 acres owned by DNR along with the 1,200 acres leased from Langlade County is too small for the needs of the sharp-tailed grouse and the management emphasis was changed to waterfowl habitat management.

Flowages for the Future

Today, Ackley Wildlife Area and surrounding County Forest lands have more than 40 flowages and are managed primarily for waterfowl with more than 650 acres of surface water. Marshland wading and songbirds and furbearing animals also thrive in this lush wetland community.



More flowages may be developed to provide for wildlife if funding becomes available.

Over one thousand acres of grassland surround these wetlands and are also actively managed. The grasslands are managed by controlled burns, mowing, and chemical processes to provide precious nesting habitat for mallards, blue-winged teal, and grassland birds. Adjacent county forest lands are managed for timber production and forest wildlife habitat to provide good habitat for deer, bear, ruffed grouse, woodcock, and a whole host of non-game species. Langlade and Marathon County Forestry Departments cooperatively manage 27,000 multi-use acres surrounding this wildlife area with an emphasis on wildlife. These lands provide for a diversity of wildlife far into the future.

For the Sportsperson

If you like hunting, this large public area provides excellent opportunities to pursue your pastime. Hunters encounter limited disturbance and crowding from other people. Deer and bear populations are good. The vast acreage of wetlands provide the waterfowler with ample space to hunt ducks and geese across the many flowages. The woodlands of the surrounding County Forests provide good habitat for the deer hunter and the upland bird hunter who seek grouse and woodcock. In late fall, trappers can find abundant beaver, muskrat, and mink in the wetland habitats.

Watchable Wildlife



Twilight hours in spring and fall bring a flurry of activity here at the many flowages within Ackley. The three parking areas on state lands in Langlade County, and the Bitzke Birdwalk and the Mill Road parking areas in Marathon County provide excellent wildlife viewing areas. Bring your camera and binoculars to view Canada geese, mallards, teal, and wood ducks as they actively feed, prepare for the nesting season, or their fall migration flight south. Bitzke Birdwalk is a premiere place to watch wildlife and is designated as a watchable wildlife viewing site in Wisconsin. Its viewing opportunities are described in detail in the **Wisconsin Wildlife Viewing Guide**. Sandhill cranes can also be seen in the wildlife area from March until October. Furbearers, shorebirds, and grassland birds can best be viewed from the flowages and surrounding grassy areas. For a treat, be sure to keep your eyes sharpened for the resident eagles.

Get Out and Recreate!

You can enjoy many recreational activities at this wildlife area. Winter snow provides an avenue for snowmobiles to travel through the wildlife area and many trails intersect in nearby cities for easy access. If you enjoy traveling by foot, miles of hiking trails wind through this public land offering both long stretches and short loops. Interpretive signage, an observation tower, and boardwalks are just some of the exciting highlights of the trails crossing Bitzke Birdwalk's five waterfowl flowages. In the summer, bring your appetite for sweet raspberries and you may also find a fair blueberry crop for a summer dessert.

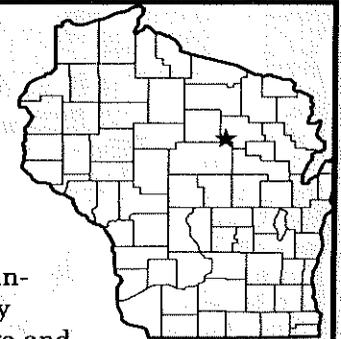
Tread Softly

There are many things you can do to enhance your experience at Ackley Wildlife Area today and for the future:

- Observe wildlife from a distance that **they** consider safe. If their behavior changes when you approach, you are too close.
- Let wildlife stay wild! Feeding wildlife can be hazardous to you and to their natural processes.
- Respect the rights of others to recreate quietly and privately.

Location

Ackley Wildlife Area and the surrounding forests of Langlade and Marathon Counties lie midway between Antigo and Merrill. State Highway 64 runs east and west through the heart of this area.



Take highway 45/47 to Antigo and travel nine miles west on 64 to get here, or take Highway 51 to Merrill and travel east approximately 12 miles on 64. Access to the Bitzke Bird Walk is located on the south side of the property off Marathon County Highway "G".

For more information contact:

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